

wherein quantitating or detecting the PCR amplified DNA quantitates or detects the target molecule. --

REMARKS

Support for new Claims 24-46 is found throughout the specification, e.g., page 23, lines 30-33, page 31, lines 7-11, page 35, lines 14-22 and 25-33, and page 36, lines 11-23, as well as Figures 3, 4, and 6. No question of new matter arises and entry of the amendments and new claims is respectfully requested.

In light of the above, Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance and therefore request favorable consideration.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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4-1-02

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SERIAL NO.

DOCKET NO.: 9491-047-27

MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

17. (Twice Amended) The method of Claim 23, wherein the nucleic acid detector molecule is RNA and the RNA detector molecule is reverse transcribed to form DNA before or during amplifying step [c] d).

23. (Twice Amended) A method for quantitating or detecting the presence of a target [compound] molecule in a sample which may contain the target [compound] molecule, comprising:

(a) exposing a sample which may contain the target [compound] molecule to a capture antibody or target molecule binding fragment thereof which binds to the target molecule under conditions whereby a capture antibody:target molecule complex is formed;

(b) adding to the capture antibody:target molecule complex, an RNA or DNA aptamer detector molecule which binds to the target molecule to form a capture antibody:target molecule:aptamer ternary complex;

(c) when the aptamer is an RNA detector molecule, reverse transcribing the RNA to DNA;

(d) amplifying the DNA aptamer or DNA obtained by step (c) by PCR amplification; and

(e) quantitating or detecting the PCR amplified DNA using a detectable non-primer probe which binds to the DNA using real time PCR during PCR amplification;

wherein quantitating or detecting the PCR amplified DNA quantitates or detects the presence of the target [compound] molecule when present at a concentration equal to or less than about 5000 pg/mL.